

What to Expect at Puppy School Classes

1. Fun and friendly atmosphere



Puppy School wants everyone attending classes to learn easily in a comfortable, encouraging atmosphere. Please don't worry that you or your puppy will not be good at all the exercises. Both the humans and the puppies will have different abilities and everyone will progress at different rates. Please try not to compare your puppy's progress with others - another owner may have more experience than you or an easier puppy.

Your tutor will help you to achieve success. Don't worry if your puppy goes to toilet in the hall, barks in class or does anything else you would prefer it didn't do! Remember that everyone's puppy is only just learning how to behave, mistakes will happen, and your tutor is there to help you overcome problems and turn them into learning experiences. Please enjoy the experience.

2. What can be achieved in classes

During classes, exercises will be explained and clearly demonstrated by the tutor. You will practice these exercises with your puppy and the tutor will coach you.

The following will be covered:

- Come when called
- 'Sit' 'down' 'stand'
- Walk on loose lead
- 'Wait'
- 'Off'
- Socialisation with adults, children attending class, and other puppies
- How to greet humans appropriately
- Getting used to be handled, examined, hugged, lifted and grabbed by owners and strangers
- Food bowl, chew/bone manners

Since there is a lot to cover in each class, you will only get a short time to practice each of the exercises. For this reason, it is necessary to practice all exercises every day at home in frequent, short sessions in order to train your puppy well. Since exercises will be easy and fun, this should not be a chore, but something that can be done by any member of the family during times when you have a few moments spare (e.g. during TV adverts).

3. Preparing your puppy

If you have to travel to classes by car, it is best to get your puppy used to car travel beforehand. Travelling in cars can be an unsettling experience for young puppies, so prepare as follows:

- Play with your puppy and feed small meals in the car when it is stationary to give pleasant associations with being inside
- Take your puppy on short journeys, ending with a walk or a play session
- Close doors carefully and drive considerately. Remember that your puppy cannot see where the car is going, is not sitting in a seat, and cannot predict when the next corner will be coming up
- Arrive in plenty of time to allow your puppy to recover from the journey before class begins

Your puppy needs to be interested in working for the treats you are offering during training. For this reason, it is not a good idea to feed your puppy just before the class. It is important that your puppy is not too hungry either, as this it will affect their ability to concentrate. Feeding a small meal a few hours in advance of the class can help to sooth the appetite, but still leave your puppy wanting more.

If you own a boisterous puppy that has lots of energy, try to arrange a vigorous play and free running session in a safe place before coming to class. This will help to ensure that your puppy is in a calm, ready-to-learn mood.

Most puppies are a little overwhelmed by the experience of coming to class at first. They soon learn to enjoy it and it is a good learning experience for them, but expect a drop in your puppy's confidence when coming to class for the first time.

Try to arrive at least 15 minutes early at the venue. This will allow your puppy to recover from the journey, take a small walk and go to toilet before coming into class.

4. Disease control

It is important that your puppy is vaccinated and cleared by your veterinary surgeon prior to attending classes. Different vets have differing views on what is the best way to protect against contagious diseases so it may be a good idea to ask the opinion of several before making a decision on what is best for your puppy. Please bring your puppy's vaccination certificate with you when attending the first class.

It is likely that your puppy will be given medication to kill intestinal worms at the time of vaccination. Puppies usually acquire roundworms from their mothers, and so need a good worming programme to ensure they are free of them.

Since these worms can be transferred to humans, please ensure that your puppy has been wormed with a prescription wormer before attending classes. To reduce the risk of cross-infection, there will be no communal water bowl in class.

Puppies get thirsty after travelling, playing and eating treats, so please provide your own water bowl and offer drinks frequently.

5. What to bring



Your puppy, wearing a plain buckle collar, with cloth or leather lead (no chain collars or leads, head collars, harnesses or Flexi leads please). Please put the collar on a few days before coming to classes so that your puppy is already used to it before attending.

ii. All the family including any children over the age of 4 years. Everyone is welcome, and the more people who attend, the more socialisation can be done.

iii. Small, tasty titbits. These should be small so your puppy does not become full too quickly. Pieces about the size of a small pea are best. There are plenty of tasty treats on the market that can be cut up into small pieces. Alternatively, cooked liver that has been cut into small cubes and dried in the oven, or cheese is usually very acceptable to puppies. Soft, smelly food is usually more acceptable than dry, hard food, but some puppies will work well for the dry kibble food they are usually fed. If you are introducing new foods, be careful not to feed too much and upset their digestion. Feed gradually increasing amounts in the days leading up to the first class so they get used to it gradually.

Use whatever titbits work best for your puppy. You may find that, after a few weeks, your puppy begins to lose interest in working for familiar treats. For this reason, it is best to vary the treats from week to week.



iv. Toys. Some puppies work harder for a game with a toy than for food. Bring your puppy's favourite toy so that you can use it to attract his attention if you need to. Soft toys that can be bitten and tugged are best. Please avoid squeaky toys and toys that roll as these can cause a distraction for other puppies.

v. Water and a bowl.

vi. A small piece of bedding for your puppy to relax on during demonstrations and handling exercises.

vii. Many exercises require you to sit on the floor, so please wear comfortable clothes and bring something to sit on if required.

viii. Pooh bags. Your tutor will explain what to do if your puppy goes to toilet in the hall. Please bring a supply of pooh bags (nappy sacks are suitable) and clean up after your puppy if it toilets in the area around the hall or out on a walk.

Every week, bring:

- Titbits
- Toys
- Water bowl + small bottle of water Small piece of bedding for your puppy
- Pooh bags
- Something to sit on if required

Plus:

Week 1 bring:

- Vaccination certificates
- Puppy's towel

Week 2 bring:

- Grooming brush
- Food bowl
- Chew

6. Words and signals

As a family, it is important to decide on the words and hand signals you will use to ask your puppy to do a particular action. This will help to ensure that everyone is consistent and this will help avoid any confusion for your puppy.